



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

M I C H I G A N

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

September 13, 2012

Representative John Walsh
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Walsh:

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports the bill Representative Tom McMillin and others introduced, HB 5804. This bill that provides for the establishment of the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission and its responsibilities will help resolve a problem we currently have in Michigan with inequitable funding for indigent defense in our court system.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan has been a member of the Michigan Campaign for Justice and appreciates the work many organizations and individuals have done to raise awareness about this important issue. The coalition has been meeting for many years to address this critical problem. As noted in the report prepared by the National Legal Aid and Defender Association in cooperation with the State Bar of Michigan issued in 2009, Michigan ranked 44th out of the 50 states in spending on public defenders. The time for improvement is now.

The League of Women Voters supports state funding of all of the costs of an indigent person's defense. We applaud your efforts to change the current system. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Smith
President